

**REMARKS**

Entry of the amended claims is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution without incorporating additional subject matter); (3) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and/or (4) place the application in better form for appeal (if necessary). Entry is thus requested.

By the present response, Applicant has canceled claims 2 and 15 without disclaimer. Further, Applicant has amended claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 19 to further clarify the invention. Claims 1, 3-5, 7-14 and 16-21 remain pending in the present application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 14, 17 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,839,346 (Kametani et al.) in view of admitted prior art in Applicant's specification, paragraphs [0003]-[0006] and figure 1 (APA). Claims 2, 3, 8-13, 15, 16 and 19-21 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Serial No. **10/026,777**

Docket No. **K-0380**

Amendment dated May 11, 2006

Reply to Office Action of March 22, 2006

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 2, 3, 8-13, 15, 16 and 19-21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 14, 17 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kametani et al. in view of APA.

Regarding claims 1 and 14, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 14 with the subject matter of claims 2 and 15, respectively, deemed allowable by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicant submits that these claims are now patentable over the asserted prior art at least for these reasons.

Regarding claims 4, 5, 7, 17 and 18, Applicant submits that these claims are dependent on one of independent claims 1 and 14 and, therefore, are patentable at least for the same reasons noted regarding these independent claims.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the none of the cited references, taken alone or in any proper combination, disclose suggest or render obvious the limitations in the combination of each of claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 14, 17 and 18 of the present application. Applicant respectfully request that these rejections be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed.

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### **CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 14, 17 and 18 are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of such claims is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, Frederick D. Bailey, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,  
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